**Inadequacy of entitlement officers to Export House**

2396. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Federaion of Indian Export Organisations has drawn the attention of Government to the utter inadequacy of the entitlement offered to Government recognised export houses, trading houses under the Special Licenecs Scheme;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) whether Government propose to liberalise the Import Licence Scheme to encourage exports/imports; and

(d) if so, by when and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) Review of the Export and Import Policy is a continuous process and changes in the policies are made as and when considered necessary.

**Government decision to join Regional Trading Blocks**

2397. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to join regional trading blocks by giving recognition to the prevailing trends in the world trading system;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have decided to join Association of South East Asian Nations for trading; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) There is no proposal for India to join a regional trading bloc.

(c) and (d) There is no proposal for India seeking membership of the ASEAN. Both India and ASEAN have however, decided upon establishing a sectoral djalogue relationship covering such areas as trading, investment and tourism. The aim of this exercise is to promote trade and economic exchanges between the two sides within the Multilateral Trading System established under the GATT.

India prefers the multilateral to the regional approach. Our efforts have been to strengthen multilateralism during the Uruguary Round as it is believed that non-discriminatory trade offers the greatest promises for expansion of world trade.

**Report of study group on price of Natural Rubber**

2398. SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Goverment had set up a study group to make recommendations regarding fixation of price of Natural Rubber;

(b) if so, whether the report has been submitted to Government;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether Government have fixed the remunerative price of rubber recently in the light of the recommendations of the study group;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(g) what is the time by which the remunerative price of rubber on the basis of the recommendations of the study group is proposed to be fixed?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (g) The Government has not constituted any Study Group to give recommendations on the cost of production of natural rubber. However, Government has been announcing revision in the Bench Mark Price of natural rubber (RM-IV and RMA-V grade) based on the cost study report of the Cost Accounts Branch of the Ministry of Finance which makes its recommendations taking into account the increases that have taken place from time to time in the cost of various inputs for production of natural rubber. The Bench Mark Prices for RMA-IV and RMA-V grades have been fixed on 5th January, 1993 at Rs. 23,450 per metric tonne for RMA-IV grade and Rs. 22,950 per metric tonne for RMA-V grade based on the recommendations of the Cost Accounts Branch.

2399. [*Transferred to 18th March, 1993*].

**Steps to boost Engineering exports**

2400. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the engineering exports target for 1992-93 is likely to be missed;

(b) whether the exports have declined in dollar terms;

(c) if so, what is the extent of decline till December, 1992; and

(d) what steps Government propose to take to boost up engineering export?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) It appears from the trend observed in exports during April 1992—November 1992, that the target set for the year 1992-93 for engineering goods is likely to be achieved.

(b) There has not been any decline in engineering export in dollar terms during the period April 1992—November, 1992 as compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Promotion of exports has been the constant endeavour of the Government. Making available inputs for export production, provision for import of capital goods for export production at concessional import duty in lieu of export obligation, making available export credit at concessive interest rates, exemption of income derived from levy of income-tax, readjustment of exechange rate of rupee, vis-a-vis major currencies of the world, benefit of conversion of entire export earning at market rate of exchange and assistance from Market Development Fund for participation abroad in fairs, buyear-seller meets and other export promotion measures are some of the important constituents of Government's strategy to boost exports.

**Suggestions made by the Rubber Board**

2401. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Rubber Board has requested the Government not to import natural rubber this year;

(b) if so, what are the reasons that the Board has made such a request; and

(c) what is the reaction of the Government to the Board's suggestion?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.